

Announcement of an effort to restore water quality in Laurel Fork in Pocahontas, Virginia

PUBLIC MEETING: Pocahontas Presbyterian Church at 134 Moore Street in Pocahontas, Virginia, on July 13, 2005 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

PURPOSE OF NOTICE: The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Conservation and Recreation are announcing the start of a study to restore water quality, a public comment opportunity, and public meeting.

MEETING DESCRIPTION: First public meeting on a study to restore water quality

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: DEQ is working to identify pollutants that impair aquatic organisms and identify sources of bacteria contamination and causes of low levels of dissolved oxygen in the waters of Laurel Fork which flows through Pocahontas in Tazewell County Virginia. The bacteria contamination exceeds water quality standards, which prohibits the recreational use. Low dissolved oxygen impairs or decreases the number and variety of aquatic organisms in the water.

The 2.9 mile long "impaired" stream segment on Laurel Fork begins at Route 644 and flows downstream through the Town of Pocahontas to Bluestone River. The stream is impaired for failing to meet the *Aquatic Life Use* based on dissolved oxygen violations, violations of the general standard for aquatic organisms and failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform and e.coli. bacteria violations.

During the study, DEQ will determine the pollutants impairing the aquatic community and develop total maximum daily loads, or TMDLs, for the impaired waters. A TMDL is the total amount of a pollutant a water body can contain and still meet water quality standards. DEQ will also determine the sources of bacteria contamination and develop a TMDL for bacteria. To restore water quality, contamination levels have to be reduced to the TMDL amount.

HOW A DECISION IS MADE: The development of a TMDL includes a public comment period, including public meetings. After public comments have been considered and addressed, DEQ will submit the TMDL report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

HOW TO COMMENT: DEQ accepts written comments by e-mail, fax or postal mail. Written comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ during the comment period. DEQ also accepts written and oral comments at the public meeting announced in this notice.

TO REVIEW FACT SHEETS: Fact sheets are available on the impaired waters from the contacts below or on the DEQ web site at www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl.

CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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